

**CALFED Bay - Delta Program**  
**Public Hearing, Tuesday, September 14, 1999**  
**Visalia, CA**

The CALFED goal, "To develop and implement a long-term comprehensive plan that will restore ecological health and improve water management for beneficial uses of the Bay-Delta system" is laudable. However, State Water Project users in the Empire West Side Irrigation District in Kings County, have a difficult time understanding what benefits they will receive from the proposed program outlined in the voluminous Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR.

Endangered Species regulatory actions in the Delta over the last few years have created, and apparently will continue to create, a very real potential for water supply shortages in State Water Project deliveries, as evidenced by the recent Delta Smelt crisis early this summer. This occurred in the wet year of 1999 and farmers are fearful the long term future of farming and their own livelihoods will be significantly impacted if the CALFED program does not address and make some type of guarantee regarding water supply reliability for the future. Water Supply Reliability is mentioned often as one of the goals of the CALFED Program, but details or guarantees on how this water management goal will be implemented are lacking. This is one of the primary concerns of San Joaquin Valley water users dependent on the Delta.

The Executive Summary "Overview of the Preferred Program Alternative" clearly indicates the primary emphasis in the program is ecosystem restoration, water quality improvement, and the reduction of adverse environmental effects, not the improvement of water supply reliability to agricultural water users. The next to last item in the list of multiple benefits which will be provided (Pg. ES-16) indicates the program will develop "...appropriate groundwater and surface storage in conjunction with specified water conservation, recycling, and water transfer programs to provide water for the environment at times when it is needed most, and to improve water supply reliability." The emphasis appears to be on constructing appropriate storage facilities to improve or provide water for the environment, and it then mentions the program also might help water supply reliability. No specifics are given. This emphasis does not give a lot of comfort to agricultural water users.

The CALFED program needs to provide a strong and equal emphasis on reducing future adverse human effects from water supply shortages. During the last few years Californians have begun to take an active role in constructing enlarged infrastructure and other facilities to meet its ever-increasing population growth. Caltrans construction is occurring all over the state to increase the capacity of our existing highways. Several new prisons have been built to meet the demands of housing prisoners. Studies are proceeding on a high-speed rail from southern California to the Bay Area, and Governor Davis, in a new agreement with the Indian tribes, will allow the number of slot machines at Indian Casinos to more than double. Other construction is also moving forward, but CALFED is unable to commit to the construction of new water storage facilities to improve existing and future water supply reliability for all water users in the state.

---

Comments of Roger L. Reynolds, Summers Engineering, Inc.  
on behalf of Empire West Side Irrigation District  
Stratford, California  
Kings, County